Little Mermaid in Love

RIN!
RIIIIIN!
shhh...
DAMMIT, JUST HOW FAR AWAY DID HE GET WASHED?!
WITH THE WAVES THIS BIG, THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN
QUIET!
WE'RE GOING TO FIND RIN!
HE FOUND THAT LITTLE GIRL, AFTER ALL.
SO LIKE HELL WE'RE GIVING UP ON HIM!

YOU...
...SAVED A CHILD?

AND IN DOING SO, YOU'VE DROWNED...
WHAT A FOOL...

Who...is that?
HAA!
Blue eyes...
...SO BEAUTIFUL...

CHECK OUT THIS SEA GLASS, SOUSUKE!
ISN'T IT A NICE COLOR?

ARGH.
YEAH YEAH, I KNOW THAT!
BUT IT'S SO DAMN HOOOOT!
TO MY KNOWLEDGE, OUR JOB DOES NOT INVOLVE PICKING UP TRASH ON THE BEACH—
IT MAKES YOU WANNA GO AND SEE THE OCEAN!
.....RIN.
UGH. I REALLY WANNA SWIM—.
...
RIN.
...

YOU WERE ON THE BRINK OF DYING JUST THE OTHER DAY.
AND YET YOU STILL WANT TO SWIM IN THE OCEAN?
...
IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE ONLY GOT BAD MEMORIES OF THE PLACE
WHEN I SEE THE OCEAN... IT KIND OF MAKES ME WANT TO GO BACK...
...OI,
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE...!
BACK TO WHEN I SWAM COMPETITIVELY!
POKE
!
...DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT

...YOU WERE THE ONE WHO SAVE ME THAT NIGHT, RIGHT?

THANKS, SOUSUKE.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY. I WON'T SWIM IN THE OCEAN EVER AGAIN.

...

Here I thought you were serious
HUH?! HARSH!
IDIOT
I WAS THINKING MORE ABOUT YOUR GRANDMOTHER
Rustle
I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN THIS COLOR
Blue sea glass...
A salty scent...
The rhythm of the waves makes my eardrums shiver...
The dark depths...

And eyes a deep blue hue, like sea glass...
RIN!
JUST NOW... I...
WHAT'S WRONG? GET TOO MUCH SUN?
LET'S GRAB A BITE.
AH-- SORRY!
I'M COMING!
I ALMOST HAD IT...

HARUKA-SAAAN!
YOU'VE GOT AN ORDER!
!
SO I THOUGHT IT'D BE BEST IF YOU PREPARED HIS MEAL!
BUT MY BROTHER'S HERE!
The chef's eating mackerel?!
mackerel
FROWN
OH! I'M SORRY! WERE YOU ON BREAK?
TADA!
Sorry for the wait!

THIS SHOULD COMPLETE YOUR ORDER!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
Eek!
Eek!
I wanted to see you in your uniform!
Get back to work! -_-
HOW'RE YOU FEELING?
MR. FREE-LOADER.
I HEAR YOU'RE STAYING WITH RIN'S GRANDMOTHER?
HE CAN UNDERSTAND SPEECH, BUT HE CAN'T SAY ANYTHING ON HIS OWN
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
nod
HARU.

I SEE...
BUT STILL--
I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EARS WHEN MY GRAMS SAID SHE WAS GONNA SHACK UP WITH THIS GUY!
GUESS HE GOES FOR COUGARS!
BUT WHEN I MET THE GUY MYSELF...
OWW!!
Onichan...
YOU EVEN UNDER-STAND SLANG??

HE WAS LIKE A LITTLE KID. .
Haru came to live with us one week ago.
YOU BRING HIM HOME OUT OF THE BLUE AND NOW HE'S GONNA LIVE WITH US?!
WHO THE HELL IS THIS GUY?
UH...NICE TO MEET YOU. .?
Her lover? Probably not
...YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
PICKED HIM UP DOWN BY THE BEACH

!?
tug
clutch
!?
NOT A HUG! A HAND-SHAKE!
OH MY, HE SEEMS QUITE FOND OF YOU!
Ohohoho!
N-NO, NOT THAT!
Squeeze
Squeeze

I FOUND HIM WASHED UP ON THE ROCKS THIS MORNING, SEE.
NO MATTER WHAT I ASKED, HE JUST SHOOK HIS HEAD AT ME.
SAYING HE DOESN'T REMEMBER
THAT POOR CHILD CAN'T SPEAK.
SO GUESS WHAT HE'S ASKING FOR.
HUH?!
THIS IS BAD, IF HE CAN'T EVEN TALK!
HAVE YOU CONTACTED HIS FAMILY?
I DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE.
ARE YOU SERIOUS...?
YOU'RE AN OFFICER OF THE LAW, AFTER ALL.
SO SEE IF YOU CAN'T FIND OUT WHO HE IS.
THIS JUST GETS WORSE AND WORSE...
THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AFTER HIM HERE FOR A WHILE.

Fidget Fidget
....HUH?
He can't speak...and on top of that, he's got no memories...?
This guy is CRAZY fishy...
TADA!!
YOU-- HEY!
THAT SHIRT'S ON BACKWARDS!
the collar's stuck
GAHAHA!
Fashion Monster
....
HE'S A STRANGE BOY, ISN'T HE...?
'STRANGE' DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO COVER IT.
huff huff
DID YOU FORGET HOW TO WEAR CLOTHES TOO??

lean in
shock
SO...
DO YOU AT LEAST REMEMBER YOUR NAME...?
You're gonna write it on my palm...?
OH, I SEE...
HE'S GOT NO CONCEPT OF PERSONAL SPACE...
H...
A...
L...
HARU...
HARUKA?
HUH...
WELL THEN, I'M RIN!

ri
n

His name was Haruka.

That was all I knew.

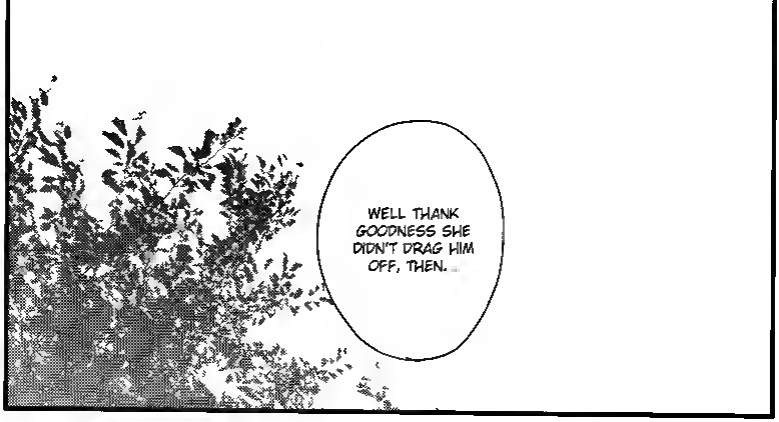
But I felt like someone who smiled as beautifully as that...

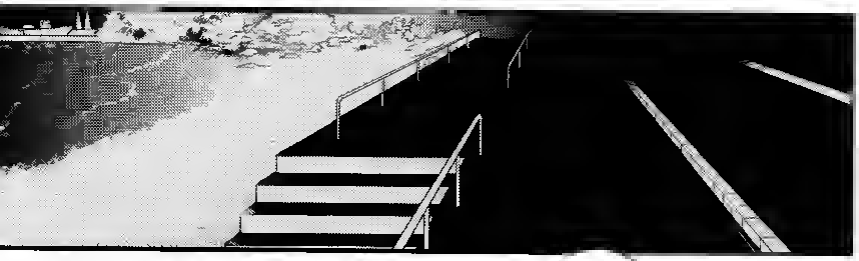
...couldn't be that bad a guy.

HEY...
I CHECKED FOR ANYONE WITH HIS DESCRIPTION ON THE MISSING PERSONS LIST,
BUT NOTHING CAME UP...
HM
I'LL TRY ASKING THE POLICE IN THE NEXT STATE OVER
CUT IT OUT!
THERE'S NO NEED TO TREAT HIM LIKE A CRIMINAL!
twitch
IT'S TOUGH NOT KNOWING WHO HE IS, RIGHT?
WHY NOT TRY CHECKING WITH THE FEDS?

HE'S NOT A DANGER TO ANYONE.
I'LL SWEAR TO THAT.
SWEAR TO IT.. HUH?
WELL, IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL...
rustle
HEY, HAVE YOU HEARD THE RUMORS? ABOUT THE SIREN?
THE ONE THAT SHOWED UP DURING THE STORM, RIGHT?
IT'S ALL THE FISHING FOLK CAN TALK ABOUT THESE DAYS!
I'D LOVE TO MEET ME A SEXY SIREN JUST ONCE!
Hahaha!
YOU'RE AN IDIOT--YOU'D GET KILLED!

WHO SAYS I WOULDN'T LIKE TO GO LIKE THAT?
Haha hahaha!
...HOW RIDICULOUS
SIRENS ARE JUST PRODUCTS OF SUPER-STITION..
BUT THERE ARE RUMORS STILL...
MAYBE THAT MEANS SOMEONE SAW ONE ..
IT WAS RALPH, THE ONE WHO WAS LOOKING FOR YOU WITH ME.
HE WAS SCREAMING HIS HEAD OFF ABOUT HOW HE'D LOCKED EYES WITH A MER-MAID....
NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT'D BLOW UP INTO SOMETHING LIKE THIS .
HMM..


WELL THANK GOODNESS SHE DIDN'T DRAG HIM OFF, THEN.



HAVE YOU SETTLED INTO YOUR ROLE AS A COOK?
HONESTLY, YOUR COOKING IS THE BEST AT THE CAFE.

You should be happy!!
DON'T ACT LIKE YOU DON'T WANT TO!
SHAKE
SHAKE
I KNOW MY GRAMS HIRED YOU, BUT YOU COULD BECOME THE HEAD CHE-

THE OCEAN'S CALM TONIGHT
C'MON, LET'S HEAD HOME
HM?
WHAT'S WRONG?
shhhh...
?!
grab
THOSE ARE THE ROCKS!
IT'S TOO DANGER-
dash
HEY, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!

I NEVER KNEW THERE WAS A PLACE LIKE THIS...
I CAME HERE ALL THE TIME AND NEVER REALIZED...
THE OCEAN'S BEAUTIFUL...
WHUMP
?!
HEY---WAIT A MINUTE, YOU'RE NOT PLANNING
march
march

KA-
BLOOSH
"I FOUND HIM WASHED UP ON THE ROCKS, YOU SEE..."
THAT IDIOT...!
HE CAN'T EVEN SWIM!!
DAMMIT!
rustle
SPLASH
bubble
bubble

PLUS .
HE CAN SWIM JUST FINE!
...THE HELL?
He's crazy fast!!

TACKLE
HARU!!
YOU'RE AMAZING!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D HIDE IT WHEN YOU CAN SWIM THAT FAST!
SPLASH
HEY, HOW DO YOU SWIM LIKE THAT?
?
C'MON, DON'T PLAY DUMB!
LIKE A FISH
I can SO do it!
HUH??
Pfft...
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I WAS GOING TO BE AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE!
I EVEN WENT TO A SCHOOL RENOWNED FOR ITS SWIMMING PROGRAM.
.....?

I QUIT SWIMMING AFTER THAT...
...
I TRAINED EVERY DAY, BUT IN THE END, I JUST COULDN'T CUT IT...
Squeeze
BUT I REALLY DO
...LOVE SWIMMING
HUH?
WHAT?
I'M NOT GETTING IN AGAIN, YOU KNOW.

I BET GRAMS AND GOU'LL GIVE ME HELL IF I GO HOME LIKE THIS
UGH, MY CLOTHES ARE ALL SOAKED..

SWIMMING AT NIGHT'S DANGEROUS.
DRIP
DRIP
YOU SHOULD KNOW--YOU *DID* NEARLY DROWN

URK!
!?
AND YOU MAY THINK THIS IS MY PROBLEM,
BUT THEY'LL BE PISSED AT YOU TOO!

Y'SEE...
MY DAD DIED AT SEA.

GRAMS DOESN'T LIKE IT...
...WHEN I SWIM.
GRAMS ..
GOU. .
EVEN SOU-SUKE.
THEY ALL WEAR THE SADDEST EX-PRESSIONS.
...IT MAKES ME WISH I COULD GO FAR, FAR AWAY SOMETIMES.

...NOT THAT
...I'D EVER ACTUALLY LEAVE
UGH... WHY AM I TALKING ABOUT THIS KIND OF THING WITH YOU?
I GUESS JUST LOOKING AT YOU BRINGS ALL KINDS OF STUPID STUFF TO THE SURFACE.
YOU'RE SO WEIRD.

flinch
lick
AH...
lick
PFFT!
HAHAHA!
YOU'RE NOT A DOG!
GEEZ, YOU.
ARE YOU TRYING TO CHEER ME UP, NOW?
.....?
You were right, Grams...
He really is a strange one...

A mysterious man from far, far away...

That gaze, as innocent as a newborn babe's...

...feels like it sees right through me...

And that scares me.

The blue of sea glass...

HUMANS CHEER EACH OTHER UP...
...LIKE *THIS*

Help me remember... Haru...

To Be Continued...